Preface

Abstract How do, could and should the various institutions responsible for the production of security and the management of conflict in Tropical African societies evolve in response to the presence of violent conflict? The research reported in this issue of the *IDS Bulletin* is built on the observation that all governance (especially in Africa) is multilevelled and networked – from the village to the international organisation, and well beyond what is specified in formal government structures. Thus the focus must be not only on the ways in which key conflict-management institutions evolve themselves but also on the changing ways in which the networks in which they are embedded actually operate.

Violent conflict is deeply damaging to human security and wellbeing. And when it undermines social order it can threaten states as well as the larger societies they are supposed to nurture. Today almost no one seriously questions these propositions and much effort has been devoted to identifying the causes of violent societal conflict and to its prevention. Despite our best efforts, however, civil wars and other such conflicts have and most likely will continue to persist. The international community devotes substantial resources to restoring social order and rebuilding states torn apart by civil war. We know much less, however, about 'how to put Humpty Dumpty back together again' than we do about the causes of his 'great fall from the wall'. This issue of the *IDS Bulletin* is devoted to post-conflict reconstruction and the rebuilding of shattered states and societies in Tropical Africa.

How do, could and should the various institutions responsible for the production of security and the management of conflict in sub-Saharan African societies evolve in response to the presence of violent conflict? In order to answer this fundamental question the research reported in this *IDS Bulletin* is built on the observation that all governance (especially but not only in Africa) is multilevelled and networked – from the village to the international organisation, and well beyond what is specified in formal government structures. Thus the focus must be not only on what states ideally should be doing to rebuild the security of their societies but also the ways in which key conflict-management institutions evolve themselves in the course of conflict as well as on the changing ways in which the networks in which they are embedded actually operate.

Security here is considered to include not only physical security from violent aggression but also from human threats that would lead to a significant diminishment in a community's wellbeing. Thus the threats to be considered include not only violence itself but also ones to resources and livelihoods on which communities are dependent.

The institutions that might manage and/or provide protection against such conflicts include: the armed forces, the police, the courts (civil as well as criminal), institutions of local governance (including 'traditional' ones), elections (and other methods of choosing leadership), international institutions (such as the United Nations, African Union, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, World Food Programme, and the World Bank), and the community of international donor nations.

The premises that have guided our programme of research have been that:

- In conflict and post-conflict situations today sovereignty often exists only as a formal, juridical concept – and this is especially true in Africa (Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Katzenstein 1996; Jackson 1990). No one

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institution or even set of institutions is in charge. Authority is negotiated in complex and fluid sets of relationships between institutions that range from the villages of Africa to the metropolises of the industrial world. Whether or not the erosion of sovereignty in Africa is judged to be good or bad, it is an empirical reality and must feature prominently in any attempts to understand and improve conflict management on the continent. We focused our research on sub-Saharan Africa because fragile states are too common there but, more importantly, because that is where we live and work. The question therefore is what new concepts can be proposed to better fit with the current circumstances of Tropical Africa.

- The fact that sovereignty has eroded so badly in Africa is a direct consequence of globalisation, which is key in explaining the large amount of violent conflict and citizen insecurity on the continent. In the contemporary globalised world, governance is multilevelled, networked and highly fluid. The institutions that manage and prevent conflict in a society include not only those of the nation-state, but also those of sub-national communities (including informal ones of geography, ethnicity and religion) as well as international and multinational ones. The empirical and theoretical underpinnings for this organising principle are particularly well argued in a pair of articles on the European Community by Christopher Ansell (2000; Ansell and Gingrich 2004). In them he demonstrates that a multilevelled, networked society operates in quite different ways than the traditional nation-state – with important policy consequences. Of course the context and the policies we confront in Africa are quite different from those of Ansell on the EU and his propositions need to be reconsidered there, but the fundamental theoretical structure is the same.
- In a networked policy, formal authority matters only modestly. Donors or international organisations may directly impact local authorities, without going through the central state, and vice versa. The boundaries between national and international and between public and private are porous. Knowledge, resources and initiative are not equal but they are widely distributed and influence therefore is diffused as well. Communication and resources flow horizontally, not hierarchically, and the shape of the resulting networks determines the patterns of action that result. When we know the range of views that are held to be acceptable within the relevant network (policy community), we know more about what might happen than we do by studying the views of formal authority figures. There is a strong personal and social dimension as well to the nature of interactions that build the network. Finally, networks tend to be fluid and focused on projects rather than on formal agencies or programmes (Ansell 2000; Baker 1992; March and Olsen 1989; Rhodes 1997).
- We demonstrate in this *IDS Bulletin* that networks are particularly important in Tropical Africa in explaining policy behaviour and decisions about public goods in general and security in particular. But this networked reality is *not* a threat to the state as an institution. In fact most often it actually reinforces it – sometimes in circumstances in which the state left wholly to its own resources could fade from view.
- Institutions evolve into markedly different structures when they are forced to manage (escalations in) violent conflict. So-called traditional institutions do not look the same after a violent conflict as they did before. Neither do the more 'modern' institutions and networks involved. Our understandings of the ways in which these institutions change and the implications for their functioning are inadequate. Yet these institutions form the building blocks out of which a reduction in violence and post-conflict order have to be constructed. (See Bates 1983; Bradbury *et al.* 2003; Brons 2001; Fearon and Laitin 2000; Leonard and Samantar 2011.)
- Not only do the 'institutional building blocks' change under conflict but so too do the networks in which they are enmeshed. The implications of multilevelled, networked governance for the management of conflict have to be unpacked as do the institutions themselves and the practical implications for action derived.

The research presented in this issue of the *IDS Bulletin* was financed by a grant from the Global Uncertainties programme of the Research Councils of the UK. The articles focus on countries in Tropical Africa that have faced substantial domestic violent conflict, including

over natural resource management and access to governmental benefits. The countries we have studied include: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the Somali polities. Some of that work has been presented in a companion issue of the *IDS Bulletin* edited by Niagale Bagayoko (2012, Vol 43.4); the full corpus of our publications are listed at the end of this volume.

The topics of research reported in this *IDS Bulletin* centre on two major areas.

Conflict management systems and the ways in which they evolve under the stress of prolonged violent conflict.
As argued most extensively in an article we wrote early in our research (Leonard and Samantar 2011), we build on a long tradition of political philosophy (Hobbes 1939 [1651]; Rousseau 1992 [1755], 2001 [1762]) and anthropology concerning the social contracts that underlie social order (e.g. see Evans-Pritchard 1940; Lewis 1999 and 2002; Marie 1997; Magagna 1991; North 1990; Tilly 1992; Weber 1947).

The premises guiding this research are that local level systems of governance generally are the key building blocks of social order in a post-conflict situation – for they were the only units managing and resolving disputes during the conflict period (Manor 2007; Bastian and Luckham 2003). Nonetheless these social structures most often have undergone considerable change during the conflict – for example, inequalities become more pronounced, patronage more prominent, and the influence of the 'purveyors of violence' greater (Leonard 2009). Thus the 'building blocks for peace' are not reflected accurately any longer in the anthropology texts on the social systems in question. A correct understanding of the evolution of these 'primary' governance systems under conflict and what can be expected of them subsequently is fundamental to the success of efforts to create peace and rebuild general social order. This point is quite evident in the work reported here from the DRC, Sierra Leone and the Somali polities.

In the periods leading into and during widespread violent domestic conflict, police and courts often deteriorate into instruments of domination rather than conflict management and resolution. *What are the dynamics that affect police and courts during protracted periods of violent conflict? What are the implications for their reconstruction (Security Sector Reform) when the conflict is winding down?* These latter two questions were addressed most fully in our project's companion issue of the *IDS Bulletin* (2012, Vol 43.4), but material related to them is found here too.

The networks of relationships within and between states, communities, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, and international donors to manage and resolve conflicts and their consequences.
As noted above, a crucial and infrequently recognised feature of contemporary state-building in Africa is the wide extent to which governance functions and the provision of public goods are distributed among complex networks of actors rather than provided by an integrated nation-state (as was the case for Cold War peacekeeping and state-building).

Fragile and recovering states are typified by a complex division of labour between government, local non-state organisations, and an array of transnational actors, including donor governments and international agencies and NGOs. In some environments, both local and international non-governmental actors may adopt some core functions of the state. The actual movement of these activities from the state alone to a mixture of state and non-state actors is parallelled by increasing attempts by donors to build state capacity, both directly and through international institutions. Notable in this regard are efforts to build administrative capacity in the central institutions of governance. We will argue in this *IDS Bulletin* that the local 'foundation blocks' of social order and governance require much more attention instead.

Neither the diffusion of core responsibilities to both local and transnational non-state actors nor attempts to build state capacity directly are likely to slow or halt, nor are the fundamental tensions between the two trends likely to dissipate. As such, we attempt to understand the implications of networked governance for institution building in weak and fragile states. Thus particular attention is paid to:

- *What configurations of networked governance are likely to degrade (or support the development of) state capacity?*
- *What forms of state building are most effective at enhancing the functionality and coordination of networked service provision?*
- *How do the emergence of networked forms interact with ongoing peace processes and the (re)creation of integrated state structures?*

The foregoing then are the intellectual and policy agendas that have shaped our research. This *IDS Bulletin* addresses them as follows.

The importance of local governance structures to citizen survival in conflict situations as well as to the reconstruction of peace and civil order are explored in the following article by David Leonard, as well as in the articles on South Kivu in the DRC (by Ferdinand Mugumo Mushi), Sierra Leone (James Bibi Maiah Vincent) and Somalia (David Leonard and Mohamed Samantar). The importance of local governance structures (including the deconcentrated agents of strong central governments) in *reducing* violent conflict is one of the themes of the research of Jeremy Allouche and Patrick Anderson Zadi Zadi on Côte d'Ivoire.

Networks are discussed most prominently in Anna Schmidt's piece on donor networks for Somalia and the following Overview article by David Leonard. But important observations about networks and their implications are found in the other articles as well.

In the final article, David Leonard returns to the political philosophers who prepared the way for the modern democratic state, this time Montesquieu. He argues that the foundations of societal and economic welfare and of successful democracy demand priority to attention to liberty and the checks and balances that produce it.

Note

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Map 1 African countries with project research

Redrawn from www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/africa.pdf.